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## NEARLY 12 CRORE DOSES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN JUNE: GOVT

**Of the total, 6.09 crore doses would be allocated to states for free, while 5.86 crore could be directly procured by them**

### STATES TO GET FREE VAX SUPPLY SCHEDULE

The Centre said it would share the delivery schedule for the free doses in advance to ensure cohesion and better planning. The announcement came on a day when the Serum Institute wrote to the home ministry, assuring to supply 9-10 crore doses in June, a steep rise considering the company had in May said it would reach the 10-crore mark only by August/September

### RAMPING UP VACCINE PRODUCTION

- Bharat Biotech, too, is ramping up production of Covaxin. Its tie-up with the Gujarat Covid Vaccine Consortium will raise its capacity to 10 crore doses by September from one crore in April
- Of the nearly 21 crore doses administered so far, around 18.5 crore are Covishield, while Covaxin's share has been around 3 crore

**7.9 crore**

DOSES WERE AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTRY DURING MAY


CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI


# ON COVID, NOTHING ASPIRATIONAL ABOUT DISTS CLASSIFIED AS SUCH

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

WITH greater focus on health, nutrition and education among others, 117 districts labeled aspirational in 2018 were supposed to set the benchmark for other districts "by competing with and learning from others".

Conventional wisdom dictated that these aspirational districts would have weathered the Covid-19 storm better than others, but a data analysis shows they have performed as poorly, if not worse, than any other in the country during the pandemic.

Take for instance Virudhunagar and Ramanathpuram in Tamil Nadu, ranked first and second by Niti Aayog, the institution that is driving the programme. Virudhunagar accounted for 388 deaths whereas 18 other districts in the state saw fewer deaths. YSR Kadappa, with health rank seven, reported 542 deaths in Andhra Pradesh.

Nandurbar in Maharashtra was ranked 95 among the aspirational districts. It reported 818 Covid deaths. Osmanabad, also in Maharashtra, saw 1,320 deaths. The district is ranked 20th. Their poor show is perhaps why on the seventh anniversary of the NDA at the Centre, two of the big slogans, aspirational districts and New India, are missing from the celebrations' lexicon.

Launched by Modi in January 2018, the drive was in line with the "New India vision by 2022." Health was listed as the first in a number of priority areas for the programme. "Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure are this programme's core area of focus," says Niti Aayog in its website. Mandarins in the government and the think-tank had made such tall claims about these districts that there was a clamour among MPs for inclusion of their constituencies in the list. The largest concentration of aspirational districts is in Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as the Centre had included a number of "left wing extremism" affected districts to showcase developmental approach against the Maoist violence.

Gaya, an LWE-affected district in Bihar, reported 185 Covid deaths whereas there were 20 districts in the state with fewer casualties. Among the non-LWE aspirational district in Bihar, Begusarai reported 125 deaths due to pandemic. The aspirational district tale is no different in UP, where Bahraich, Balrampur and Siddharthnagar are reporting high deaths. In Jharkhand, with 19 aspirational districts, the programme made no difference in mitigating the hardships of the people as Ranchi and East Singhbhum are reporting huge Covid death figures.

Ironically, the Aayog gives 30% weightage to health and nutrition while ranking the aspirational districts. It also lists big corporate names as partners for the programme.

**HOW THEY FARE**

| Aspirational districts | Health rank | Total cases | Recovered | Dead |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu) | 1 | 36,400 | 27,825 | 388 |
| Ramnathpuram (Tamil Nadu) | 2 | 16,179 | 12,681 | 211 |
| YSR Kadappa (Andhra Pradesh) | 7 | 93,709 | 88,112 | 542 |
| Raichur (Karnataka) | 11 | 37,521 | 31,943 | 264 |
| Kanker (Chhattisgarh) | 13 | 22,652 | 21,470 | 205 |
| Banka (Bihar) | 77 | 7,277 | 7,079 | 84 |
| Begusarai (Bihar) | 48 | 26,454 | 24609 | 125 |
| Gaya (Bihar) | 80 | 33,539 | 32,699 | 185 |
| Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) | 89 | 11,267 | 10,644 | 170 |
| Balrampur (Uttar Pradesh) | 87 | 7,349 | 6,925 | 129 |
| Siddharthnagar (Uttar Pradesh) | 88 | 9,100 | 8,534 | 93 |
| Osmanabad (Maharashtra) | 20 | 57,060 | 51,712 | 1,320 |
| Nandurbar (Maharashtra) | 95 | 38,721 | 36,991 | 818 |
| Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh) | 15 | 8,495 | 7,958 | 114 |
| Damoh (Madhya Pradesh) | 19 | 7,956 | 6,970 | 155 |
| Ranchi (Jharkhand) | 32 | 84,374 | 79,948 | 1,539 |
| East Singhbhum (Jharkhand) | 27 | 49,149 | 47,422 | 997 |

(Data as on May 29, 2021, taken from www.covid19india.org)

| NATIONWIDE | MAY 29 | MAY 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 1,73,790 | 1,65,553 |
| Recoveries | 2,84,601 | 2,76,309 |
| Deaths | 3,617 | 3,460 |

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

May 29: 28,09,436 doses

May 30: 30,35,749 doses

TOTAL DOSES: 21,20,66,614

# Window of credit guarantee opens for hospitals & aviation sector

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN what could be termed as the unveiling of a fresh round of its economic relief package, the government on Sunday expanded the scope of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to more sectors disrupted by the second wave of the pandemic. It will now cover medical colleges, hospitals, nursing homes and the aviation sector.

The ministry of finance also extended the validity of the scheme from June 30 to September 30, or till guarantees for an amount of ₹3 lakh crore has been issued. Disbursement under the scheme is permitted up to December 31, 2021.

The scheme announced in May 2020 aimed at giving up to ₹3 lakh crore unsecured loans to MSME and other sectors severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The government provides guarantee against loans disbursed under the scheme. Earlier, the scheme covered MSMEs, hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors, and 26 stressed sectors identified by the K V Kamath Committee.

The government has now allowed hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and medical colleges to avail loan up to ₹2 crore for setting up of on-site oxygen plants under ECLGS 4.0. The loan would be 100% guaranteed by the government. The interest rate on such loans has been capped at 7.5%.

The tenure of working capital loans provided to MSMEs under ECLGS 1.0 has been extended from four years to five years. Earlier, a moratorium of one year was given on principal repayment. Now it has been extended by a year. So MSMEs, which have availed loans under the scheme can now pay only the interest amount in the first two years and the rest of the interest and principal in the next three years.

Those MSMEs covered under ECLGS 1.0 can now avail additional loan up to 10% of the outstanding amount as on February 29, 2020. Earlier, they could avail loan up to 20% of their debt outstanding as on February 29, 2020.

The existing limit of ₹500 crore debt outstanding under ECLGS 3.0, which is for businesses from hospitality, travel and tourism, leisure and sporting sectors, has been removed.

However, the additional loan that can be availed has been limited to 40% (of debt outstanding) or ₹200 crore, whichever is lower.

Aviation has been included in the list of eligible sectors under ECLGS 3.0. Under ECLGS 2.0, 26 distressed sectors were eligible for a maximum of 20% of the debt outstanding as on February 29, 2020.

Meanwhile, Indian Banking Association Chief Executive Officer Sunil Mehta said so far ₹2.55 lakh crore has been sanctioned under the ECLGS scheme, of which ₹2.4 lakh crore has been disbursed.

**Social security net for next of kin of workers succumbing to Covid**

New Delhi: All dependent family members of insured persons under the ESIC who succumb to Covid, will be entitled to receive the same level of benefits as is given for death due to employment injury, the labour ministry said | P7

# 'India will win, howsoever big the challenge'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITH his monthly *Mann ki baat* coinciding with the seventh anniversary of his party's rule at the Centre, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Sunday sought to convey a message of optimism, saying howsoever big the challenge, India will always emerge the winner.

He said it in the context of the pandemic and natural disasters, including cyclones Tauktae and Yaas. "However big the challenge be, India's victory resolve, her *vijay sankalp*, has always been equal in magnitude. Her collective strength and our spirit of service has always rescued the country from the midst of every storm," he said. Modi said in the last seven years, the country has followed the mantra of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas*, adding there were many moments of national pride during his government's tenure.

Claiming that in seven decades after Independence, only 3.5 crore rural homes had water connections, he said 4.5 crore houses have been given clean water connections in the last 21 months alone. Referring to the Covid challenge during the second wave, Modi said oxygen production has been ramped up in a big way. "In the normal course, we were producing 900 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in a day. Today, the production has gone up to 9,500 metric tonnes a day," he said.

# Daily caseload hits a new low in K'taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE daily number of Covid-19 positive cases is seeing a consistent decline, with Sunday witnessing an addition of 20,378 new cases — the lowest since April 19 when 15,785 cases were added in a day.

The state had seen 50,112 cases added in a day on May 5, which is the highest single-day addition that the state has seen since the beginning of the pandemic, followed by 49,058 on May 6 and 48,781 the next day. The state's Covid-19 tally stands at 25,87,827, but the positivity rate has been steadily rising since April 5, currently standing at 8.73 per cent, up from 8.71 per cent on Saturday. Bengaluru saw 4,734 new cases in the day, taking the city's tally up to 11,59,237.

The active cases have been consistently decreasing and now stands at 3,42,010 in Karnataka and 1,62,625 in Bengaluru. The discharges have also been increasing since April 26, with 28,053 people recovering on May 30, taking the recovery rate to 85.67 per cent. The recovery rate has been improving since May 12, without a break, from 70.16 per cent on that day. However, Sunday's discharges were far below the highest that the state had witnessed on May 22 with 61,766 being discharged in a day, followed by 58,395 on May 18, and 57,333 on May 24.

The deaths have, however, been rising since April 5 and 382 fatalities were reported on Sunday, taking the state's toll to 28,679 and mortality rate to 1.10 per cent. In Bengaluru, 213 deaths pushed the mortality rate to 1.13 per cent, and its toll to 13,104.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said as people are seeing the benefits of the lockdown, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa will take a decision on whether lockdown extension is needed or not after consulting the Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee.

A health worker collects a nasal swab sample from a food delivery agent, as part of the Covid testing drive, in Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA KP

**Black fungus cases shoot up to 1,250 in state**

The number of mucormycosis (black fungus) cases is climbing, with a total of 1,250 patients getting infected since the second wave began. While 18 patients have been discharged so far, 39 have succumbed, and 1,193 are still under treatment. According to a health department bulletin, the majority of cases are from Bengaluru Urban (521), followed by Dharwad (119) and Kalaburagi (102). Just a week ago, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said there were over 400 fungus cases in the state. P4

| KARNATAKA | MAY 29 | MAY 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 20,628 | 20,378 |
| Recoveries | 42,444 | 28,053 |
| Deaths | 492 | 382 |

# 300% spike in Covid cases across Assam's tea gardens

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

AT a time when the national daily case count is steadily easing, the tea gardens in Assam seem to be bucking the trend by registering a whopping 300% spike in infection in 10 days among the workers.

The number of cases in 220 estates stood at 1,851 with 14 fatalities on May 19. By May 28, the numbers soared to 6,146 spread over 370 estates with 43 deaths, prodding the state government on Saturday to sanction walk-in jabs for the workers in 18-44 age group.

The efficacy of the walk-in drive, however, is doubtful as CM Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the state was low on stocks and the arrival of the next tranche was a week away.

As of now, the affected tea estate's labour lines, where workers are lodged, have been declared containment zones, with the patients being sent to Covid care facilities on the estate. However, not all estates are equipped with care centres, with only 271 having them.

FIRE-FIGHTING

Rescue ships, including those of Indian Coast Guard, fighting flames to salvage container vessel MV X-Press Pearl, off Colombo port, on Sunday. The vessel has been burning for 11 consecutive days | AFP

## MONSOON DELAYED?

The IMD on Sunday said the southwest monsoon will arrive in Kerala after a two-day delay on June 3. The forecast was in contrast to private weather monitoring agency Skymet's report, which claimed the rain bearing winds made soft landfall in Kerala on Sunday

EXPRESS READ

### Sasikala hints at political comeback

Chennai: V K Sasikala, eased out from the AIADMK years ago, has hinted at resumption of efforts to regain control of the party, and a political comeback. Her brief conversation with two of her loyalists over phone has surfaced, which has dropped hints about her rethink on the matter | P5

### Bengaluru's Fouaad seals Olympic spot

Bengaluru: India's Fouaad Mirza managed to confirm his Tokyo Olympics spot by completing the Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MERs) and finishing second and third on his horses Seigneur Medicott and Dajara 4 respectively in the CCI4*-Long eventing competition in Poland. | PTI


WITH THIS ISSUE THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex

32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF EDEX (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS


FRUIT OF INNOVATION

# When life gives you melons, make jaggery out of it!

MARX TEJASWI @ Shivamogga

IN these times of distress, especially for farmers with large amounts of produce and no takers, here is a hotelier-and-agriculturist from Shivamogga district who has come out with a "sweet" solution to tide over the crisis.

**Jayaram Shetty**, who has grown watermelon in eight acres of land at Nittur in Hosanagara taluk, has hit upon an idea of making jaggery from the sweet fruit. The method he uses is exactly like how jaggery is extracted from sugarcane which is the traditional way.

The 42-year-old Jayaram, who was running a hotel in Mumbai and was living in the metropolis for 30 years, returned to his village last year during the lockdown, and started cultivating his family land. Now, running a hotel at Nittur, he told *TNIE*, "We grew watermelon in four acres of land last year, but there were no takers because of the restrictions. Finally, some traders from Kerala purchased the stock at ₹4 per kg, which was very low. That is when I and my staff at the hotel extracted the jaggery. We used it in some dishes and we liked it. This year, I grew watermelon on my four acres and also another four acres of my friend's farm. But traders wanted it for ₹1 per kg, and I decided to make more jaggery this year."

Explaining the process, he said that juice is extracted from the fruit and filtered twice. The juice is then boiled for four hours or till it becomes thick. Around 75 kg of jaggery can be extracted from one tonne of watermelon.

He said, "I have a stock of 250 kg of jaggery now. But I am not sure of its shelf life, It has continued to taste good even after five days. If one wants to keep it longer, they can store it in a refrigerator."

Shetty requested the government to conduct more research on his process and make it a commercial success. "Then, a large number of farmers will benefit," he said.

> **Last year, some traders from Kerala purchased the (watermelon) stock at ₹4 per kg, which was very low. That is when I and my staff at the hotel extracted the jaggery** – Jayaram Shetty, Hotelier-and-Agriculturist